

## Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0520

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMSIXTFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTG SIX ZERO PT ONE

CTU SIX ZERO PT ONE PT FIVE

USS MILLER AT SEA

UNCLAS BORDEAUX 0118

DEPARTMENT ATT:EUR/WE BARBOUR

ALSO PASS ARBA

PARIS ATTENTION : CONGEN AND USDAO

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: OCLR, FR

SUBJECT: BICENTENNIAL VISIT OF USS MILLER TO SOUTH WEST OF

FRANCE.

1. SUMMARY: VISIT OF USS MILLER TO BORDEAUX, LE VERDON AND LA ROCHELLE WAS AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS: FIRST, USS MILLER PLAYED AN INTEGRAL PART IN AMCONGEN BORDEAUX,SS BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS, SECOND, VISIT PROVIDED A POSITIVE CONTRAST TO THE RECENT AND MAJOR SOVIET FLEET VISIT TO BORDEAUX, AND THIRD, USS MILLER PROMOTED MUCH GOOD WILL NOT ONLY AT THE OFFICIAL BILATERAL LEVEL BUT ALSO AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC WITH OVER APPROXIMATELY 3,000 VISITORS IN TWO DAYS IN BORDEAUX. END SUMMARY.

2. BORDEAUX VISIT: USS MILLER WAS IN BORDEAUX BETWEEN JULY 7 AND JULY 9. COMMANDING OFFICER GAMBA S OFFICIAL CALLS ON UNCLASSIFIED

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THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES WERE VERY WARM AND

PRODUCTIVE. BREAKING FROM TRADITION, THE REGIONAL PREFET OF THE AQUITAINE PERSONALLY HOSTED A LARGE RECEPTION AT HIS RESIDENCE FOR THE USS MILLER. LEADING MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES WERE PRESENT ALONG WITH A CROSS-SECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CONSULAR CORPS AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY. GENERAL PUBLIC VISITING ON USS MILLER, ON BOTH JULY 8 AND JULY 9 WERE VERY SUCCESSFUL WITH APPROXIMATELY 1,500 PERSONS VISITING THE SHIP EACH DAY. THERE WAS A VERY GOOD MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE MILLER S VISIT TO BORDEAUX ON BOTH THE RADIO AND IN THE MAJOR REGIONAL DAILY QUOTE SUD OUEST UNQUOTE WITH FEATURE STORY AND PHOTO OF THE MILLER. THE MAYOR GAVE A RECEPTION FOR THE MILLER ON JULY 8 AT THE HOTEL DE VILLE AND IN A GESTURE OF FRANCO-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP, THE AMERICAN FLAG WAS FLOWN ON TOP OF THE HOTEL DE VILLE THROUGHOUT THE MILLER S VISIT TO BORDEAUX. A BARBECUE ON BOARD THE MILLER THAT EVENING WAS WELL RECEIVED BY THE

INVITEES WHO REPRESENTED A CROSS-SECTION OF THE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES. ON JULY 9, THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRANCE-ETATS-UNIS FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION GAVE A LARGE RECEPTION AT HIS RESIDENCE FOR THE OFFICERS AND THE CREW OF THE USS MILLER, WHICH WAS MOST SUCCESSFUL.

3. LE VERDON CEREMONY: ON JULY 10, THE USS MILLER ARRIVED AT LE VERDON, AT THE MOUTH OF THE GIRONDE ESTUARY, FOR A MAJOR BICENTENNIAL CEREMONYINITIATED BY AMCONGEN BORDEAUX TO COMMEMORATE THE DEPARTURE OF LAFAYETTE TO THE UNITED STATES AND THE LANDING OF THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES IN 1917. CEREMONY TOOK PLACE AT THE PERSHING MONUMENT WITH THE USS MILLER JUST OFF SHORE, IN SIGHT OF THE MONUMENT. CAPTAIN GAMBA, HIS OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE MILLER, INCLUDING A BICENTENNIAL HONOR GUARD, PARTICIPATED IN THE CEREMONY. THE PRESENCE OF THE USS MILLER AND IT S COMMANDER AND IT S MEN GAVE THIS CEREMONY A SPECIAL STANDING WHICH WAS APPRECIATED BY THE FRENCH AS A SYMBOL OF THE CLOSE COLLABORATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II. THE MAYOR OF LE VERDON GAVE A VIN D HONNEUR FOR THE MILLER AT THE END OF THE CEREMONY WHICH WAS COVERED BY THE REGIONAL TELEVISION NETWORK AND THE LOCAL PRESS. A FEATURE PHOTO STORY HIGHLIGHTING THE USS MILLER S PARTICIPA- UNCLASSIFIED

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TION APPEARED IN QUOTE SUD OUEST UNQUOTE.

4. LA ROCHELLE: THE USS MILLER ARRIVED AT LA ROCHELLE ON THE EVENING OF JULY 10 WHICH COINCIDED WITH THE CLOSING OF THE TWO WEEK BICENTENNIAL AMERICAN CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS HOSTED BY THE CITY OF LA ROCHELLE IN IT S QUOTE RENCONTRES INTER- NATIONALES UNQUOTE SERIES. MEMBERS OF THE CREW OF THE USS MILLER WERE INVITED TO THE AMERICAN JAZZ CONCERTS. ON JULY

11, AN INFORMAL RECEPTION WAS GIVEN FOR THE OFFICERS OF THE MILLER BY A PROMINENT US CITIZEN RESIDENT IN LA ROCHELLE. ON JULY 12, OFFICIAL CALLS WERE PAID ON THE PREFET, THE MAYOR AND REAR ADMIRAL CHAUMEIL, THE COMMANDER OF THE PREFECTURE MARITIME AT ROCHEFORT, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WHOLE SOUTH WEST COAST OF FRANCE. THE ADMIRAL GAVE A FORMAL LUNCHEON FOR CAPTAIN GAMBA AND THAT EVENING THE MAYOR OF LA ROCHELLE, MICHEL CREPEAU, A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE LEFT WING PARTY, THE MOVEMENT OF THE LEFTIST RADICALS, GAVE A RECEPTION AT THE HOTEL DE VILLE FOR THE OFFICERS AND THE CREW OF THE MILLER. IN ANOTHER GESTURE OF FRANCO-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP, THE MAYOR FLEW THE AMERICAN FLAG ALONG WITH THE FRENCH TRICOLOR ON THE HOTEL DE VILLE DURING THE VISIT OF THE MILLER IN LA ROCHELLE. THAT EVENING, CAPTAIN GAMBA HOSTED A DINNER FOR THE MAYOR, THE PREFET AND ADMIRAL CHAUMEIL ON BOARD THE MILLER, WHICH WAS HIGHLY APPRECIATED BY OUR FRENCH CONTACTS.

5. COMMENTS: THE VISIT OF THE USS MILLER TO THESE THREE PORTS IN THE SOUTH WEST OF FRANCE IS CONSIDERED BY AMCONGEN BORDEAUX AS AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS. THE PRESENCE OF A US NAVAL VESSEL DURING THE BICENTENNIAL CEREMONIES HAD A VERY POSITIVE IMPACT ON PUBLIC OPINION IN GENERAL AND ON LOCAL OFFICIALS. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE STRONG HISTORIC TIES BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES, ESPECIALLY DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, AND THE TWO WORLD WARS WAS A MAJOR THEME DURING THE VISIT. ALSO, IN BORDEAUX THE PRESENCE OF THE USS MILLER DURING THE BICENTENNIAL CEREMONIES WAS CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL FOLLOWING THE MAJOR SOVIET BALTIC FLEET VISIT TO BORDEAUX IN JUNE. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO VISITS WAS REMARKABLE. IN THE FIRST PLACE, PUBLIC OPINION AND OFFICIALS WERE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT OF THE US SAILORS IN STARK COMPARISON TO THE VERY LIMITED AND CONTROLLED MOVEMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE SOVIET FLEET'S CREW. ALSO, THE WARMTH OF UNCLASSIFIED

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THE RECEPTIONS, THE SINCERITY OF THE TIES BETWEEN THE US AND FRANCE, AND PARTICULARLY FRENCH AND US MILITARY TIES, WERE EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE VISIT. THIS ATMOSPHERE WAS COMPLETELY LACKING DURING THE SOVIET VISIT. THE EXTENSIVE PRESS AND RADIO/TV COVERAGE OF THE MILLER'S VISIT IN BORDEAUX AND LE VERDON WAS AN ADDED PLUS IN BRINGING OUR BICENTENNIAL CEREMONIES TO A LARGE PUBLIC AUDIENCE IN THE SOUTH WEST OF FRANCE. ALSO, THE HIGH NUMBER OF VISITORS IN BORDEAUX AND THE IMPORTANT CEREMONY AT LE VERDON ALLOWED US TO BRING IN THE MOST NUMBER OF PEOPLE POSSIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BICENTENNIAL EVENTS.

6. I WOULD, PERSONALLY, LIKE TO COMMEND CAPTAIN GAMBA, HIS OFFICERS AND THE CREW OF THE USS MILLER FOR THE OUTSTANDING MANNER IN WHICH THEY COOPERATED TO MAKE THIS VISIT A MOST SUCCESSFUL ONE.

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